

Department of Corrections
Advisory Council, November 13, 2007
Meeting Summary

Members Present: Rep. Tim Callahan, D-Great Falls; Cascade County Sheriff Dave Castle, Great Falls; Public Defender Kris Copenhaver-Landon, Billings; Ravalli County Attorney George Corn, Hamilton; Sen. Steve Gallus, D-Butte; District Judge Kurt Krueger, Butte; Bob Peake, Youth Court Services, Helena; Sen. Trudi Schmidt, D-Great Falls; Sen. Jim Shockley, R-Victor; Toole County Commissioner Allan Underdal, Shelby; and Channis Whiteman, Crow Tribe, Crow Agency.

Members Absent: Lt. Gov. John Bohlinger, Kevin Madman and Emily Matt Salois

Guests: Anna Whiting Sorrell, J.C. Weingartner, Scott Creighton, Joe Mazurek, Jerry Marble, Brent Doig, Jim MacDonald, and Pat Gervais

Staff: Mike Ferriter, Bob Anez, Dean Smail, Mike Raczkowski, Trish Stroman, Gary Hamel, Mike Mahoney, Gayle Lambert and Myrna Omholt-Mason

Remote Vision-Net sites: Ravalli, Toole, Butte-Silver Bow and Cascade county courthouses, and Montana Women's Prison.

Call to Order:

Co-Chairman Gallus called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Participants attending introduced themselves. Mr. Gallus stated the purpose of the meeting is to organize its effort to, over the next two years, develop a long-range plan for the department.

OLD BUSINESS:

Dean Smail, the department's Website designer, showed what can be readily accessed on the Web page. Department information and available resources are key components in Mr. Smail's Website design.

DOC overview – Bob Anez presented a PowerPoint department overview. Pictures of each facility and a brief explanation of what the facility does were provided. Graphs containing statistical information regarding location of prison populations and where offenders are in the system were discussed. The Board of Pardons and Parole plays a crucial role in how the department controls offenders.

Offender population report – Gary Hamel told the council that offender population projection numbers drive the DOC budget. Consistency and accuracy are the key components of the offender population report and Mr. Hamel and his team have reconfigured the document into a one-page report with specific categories. Overall, the

population of offenders continues to grow, but even with the increased numbers, the offenders are being managed within the department's goal of 80% of offenders in community correction programs and 20% housed in secure facilities. (see handout)

NEW BUSINESS:

Anna Whiting-Sorrell – The governor's office corrections adviser asked the council to work toward developing a work plan that helps the department and the governor's office manage offenders in Montana as outlined in the governor's executive order. She stated the governor re-appointed many members to the council to maintain the continuity of thought, expertise and direction that has been already established.

Director Ferriter – The director extended his thanks to the council for their previous input. He stressed that it is critical to have planning input from the council to ensure appropriate levels of bed space and corresponding level of services for those beds.

Overview of the executive order:

- Analyze adult and juvenile offender population trends and develop long-term projections
- Determine future infrastructure needs to provide the necessary capacity for community corrections and prison alternative programs
- Analyze the state partnerships with private and public providers, and determine their ability to continue contributing to capacity within the corrections system
- Assess existing infrastructure at existing state-run correctional facilities and determine the need for renovation, expansion, and improvements
- Report council finding and recommendations to the governor

To accomplish the goals set out in the executive order, Mr. Ferriter presented the council with the department's proposed work plan. Seven meetings, in various cities, are scheduled beginning Feb. 12, 2008, and ending Aug. 19, 2009, to address the items listed in the department's plan (see handout).

Council discussion/recommendations on the department's proposed work plan:

Sen. Schmidt – Add recidivism as a topic to discuss at meeting #2

Judge Krueger – Add drug treatment court for adults and juveniles as a topic at meeting #5

Sen. Shockley- Have the council observe adult treatment court proceedings at meeting #5. Confidentiality/permission issues will need to be addressed prior to the council's attendance at either adult/juvenile court proceedings.

Commissioner Underdal – Extended an invitation to council members to tour the Shelby facility on Nov. 10, 2008 – one day prior to meeting #5

Mr. Whiteman – Add tribal-probation/parole officer relations and scope of authority of probation/parole officers as a topic to discuss at meeting #3

Additional thoughts/ideas/requests mentioned by the council:

Sen. Shockley -- Raised the issue of inmates placing collect telephone calls from Missoula Assessment and Sanction Center and Montana State Prison to the public defenders offices. Warden Mahoney will draft a written response to the senator's concerns.

Sen. Schmidt – Inquired as to the status of goals and initiatives listed in the June 4, 2007, minutes

Sen. Gallus stated four of the goals are addressed in the department's work plan or by a study under way by the Law and Justice Interim Committee: community placement options; focus on treatment, both mental health and substance abuse; support and maintain treatment options that are in place; and studying secure-care diversion alternatives for certain nonviolent offenders

Mr. Whiteman – Requested from Mr. Hamel statistics on the number of incarcerated native Americans

Sen. Gallus told the members that the council will keep in mind the goal for creating incentives for local governments for community-based services

Sex Offender Treatment Facility – Mr. Hamel reported the 2007 Legislature granted the department the authority to site a 116-bed facility in a Montana community. Meetings with various stakeholders have begun and the target completion date is April 2009. (see handout) Sen. Shockley raised the issue of prerelease centers not willing to house sex offenders and communities not wanting that type of facility in their city. Treatment providers and members of local screening committees will be invited to meeting #3 to discuss the issue.

Public Comment: Jerry Marble of Missoula stressed the importance of more frequent drug tests on youth offenders. He proposed the Missoula Youth Court require tests two or three times per week.

Motions/Next Meeting: Commissioner Underdal was in the process of making a motion to approve the department's work plan meeting dates when the video conferencing system disconnected. Rep. Callahan made a second motion to accept the Feb. 12, 2008 meeting date and subsequent dates. The Helena attendees agreed to accept the motion pending approval of the majority of council members.

The next council meeting will be Feb. 12, in room 152 at the Capitol. The meeting will convene at 8:30 a.m.

Motion was made to adjourn – motion passed.